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ABSTRACT

This issue contains interviews with adult educators on contemporary topics in the field. "Beyond the Adult Learner's Dependency" (Shannon Whelan) is an interview with Malcolm S. Knowles, who introduced the term andragogy, the notion that teaching adults is fundamentally different from teaching children. "Self-Directed Learning: The Role of the Educational Institution" (Jane Brindley) is an interview with Allen Tough focusing on the motivation that all human beings feel to learn and the effectiveness of learning projects. "Major Trends in Adult Education" (Maxim Jean-Louis) is an interview with K. Patricia Cross. It touches upon the "linear life plan," networking, dangerous developments in adult education, adult education for women, and theories driving the research in adult education today. "Learning and Education: A Crucial Difference" (Virginia Nilsson) is an interview with Roger Boshier. Topics include distinctions between learning and education, the difference between growth and deficiency motivation, recurrent education in Europe, implementing adult education principles in curriculum-oriented settings, and credit for life experience. A bibliography cites works by the four interviewees. (YLB)

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PERSPECTIVES: ON ADULT EDUCATION

NUMBER 1
AUTUMN 1988

A SUPLEMENT TO AURORA, A PUBLICATION OF ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

INTERVIEWS WITH

MALCOLM KNOWLES
on The Adult Learner's Dependency

ALLEN TOUGH
on Self-Directed Learning

PATRICIA CROSS
on Trends in Adult Education

ROGER BOSHIER
on The Difference Between Learning and Education

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The PERSPECTIVES series presents in-depth looks at a wide range of contemporary topics. For more information on this and upcoming issues, please contact the editor, Vicky Busch, at Athabasca University.

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Beyond the Adult Learner's Dependency

An interview with Dr. Malcolm S. Knowles

By Shannon Whelan

Among his many contributions to the field of education, for which he is a widely acknowledged leader, Malcolm Knowles is perhaps best known for introducing the term 'andragogy' (as opposed to pedagogy). Defined loosely as the teaching of adults, it encompasses an entire body of theory and research. Central to his theories is the notion that teaching adults is fundamentally different from teaching children, as adults bring motivations, goals, expectations, and experiences that are totally unlike a child's. The techniques for teaching adults must, therefore, reflect those differences.

Although now in semi-retirement from North Carolina University, Dr. Knowles continues to be associated with Nova University in Florida. He received his B.A. from Harvard and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Among his many published works, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy* and *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* are his most well known. His most recent book is *Using Learning Contracts*.

> We become adult by degree as we move through childhood and adolescence, and the rate of increase by degree is probably accelerated if we live in homes, study in schools, and participate in youth organizations that foster our taking increasing responsibilities. But most of us probably do not have full-fledged self-concepts of self-directedness until we leave school or college, get a full-time job, marry and start a family.
> *From The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*

For the past nine years, Shannon Whelan has been a counsellor with Athabasca University where she has provided the full range of counselling services to adult students. Working with students mainly over the telephone, she has developed expertise in the area of non face-to-face counselling techniques. Shannon has developed a special interest in career counselling and has facilitated career-planning workshops for adults at educational institutions and in the private sector. Most recently, she has written a self-instructional career-planning hand book. She presently co-ordinates the Athabasca University career-planning program.

AU: Over the years, you've made an outstanding contribution to the field of adult education; probably no other individual has done as much to assist the adult learner. How did you become interested in adult education? Was there something that provided you with your initial motivation?

Knowles: At the time that I got into the field of adult education, in 1935, most people got into it by accident. They happened to be present when a job was opened. Back then, there was

only one graduate program in adult education, where people could get professional training, and that was at Columbia University.

My career goal originally was to go into the diplomatic service in the United States but when I completed my master's program in international law in 1935, I was notified by the State Department that they were filling only the most urgent vacancies with those who had passed their exams in 1932, so there would be up to a three-year wait. That was still during the depression, of course, so I had to have a job—I'd just gotten married. I ended up applying for the job of Director of Training of a work study program for unemployed youth.

Right from the beginning, I just loved it. I organized classes, hired instructors, set up program announcements, and had a ball. A couple years later, I was at a meeting and somebody asked: "What do you do, Malcolm?" I described what I was doing, and he said "Oh, you are an adult educator," and I said, "I am?" You see, I was doing all these things, but I didn't have a label for the job.

I went into the Navy for a couple of years and while I was there, I started reading a great deal on adult education and decided to go to the University of Chicago to get my master's and doctorate degrees. That's how I came to be an adult educator.

AU: In your earlier writing about self-directed learning, you adopted the term 'andragogy' to promote adult education, and you titled your revised book *The Modern Practice of Adult Education, Andragogy vs. Pedagogy.* Then about ten years after, you changed the subtitle to read *From Pedagogy to Andragogy*, pedagogy being the teaching of pre-adults. I'm interested in knowing what prompted this shift from 'versus' to 'to'.

Knowles: When I started conceptualizing andragogical models, the research was showing that adults are different characteristically from what traditional education had assumed were the characteristics of youth. At first, I saw the two models as being antithetical—pedagogy was for children; andragogy was for adults. So that's why I chose the subtitle *Andragogy vs. Pedagogy.*

But, in the ten years between then and the revised edition, I started getting reports from teachers in elementary and secondary schools and colleges telling me that they had been experimenting with andragogical principles and finding their students learned better, in many instances, when they were treated like people. Teachers of adults were reporting to me that they had been experimenting with the andragogical model and in some situations, it didn't seem to work, so they had to use a pedagogical approach. I then realized that these are not two opposed models or assumptions, but rather parallel. Now what we have to do is check out which set of assumptions applies to which situation, and if it's the pedagogical assumptions that are realistic in that situation, then pedagogical strategies are most appropriate and vice versa. Hence, the change in my subtitle in my 1980 revision, *From Pedagogy to Andragogy.*

AU: Has this change affected your practice of adult education in any way over the years?

Knowles: Well, I'm perfectly willing to accept it now, which I wasn't for a while. When an adult enters a totally new area with which he's had no previous experience, no familiarity, he is dependent for a while on an expert to get an understanding of that subject. A good example is when people are learning how to operate new machinery, then pedagogical strategies are most appropriate especially when safety is involved.

The big difference is that a person who is dedicated to the pedagogical model will do everything he can to keep the learner dependent on him, while the person dedicated to the andragogical model will accept dependency where necessary, but then do everything he or she can to move the learner to take increasing responsibility for his or her own learning. Does that make sense to you?

AU: Yes. It clarifies the shift in emphasis. A further question would be when and how does one determine when to use pedagogical techniques as opposed to andragogical? How does an adult educator know when to use pedagogical techniques?

Knowles: First of all, I find out as much as I can through the interview, through various diagnostic instruments, about where the adults are starting from in terms of their experience and their familiarity with the program content. I find that there are some people who have a pretty good familiarity and others who don't. I then sub-group them and say to the ones that already have a familiarity, "Start drafting some subjective learning projects for yourselves." With the others who need a little more orientation to the content, I give straight lectures. That's one thing I do.

The other thing is to divide choices. In other words, let's say I have a class and I haven't been able to find out which ones are experienced and which ones aren't, as is sometimes the case in a short-term course. Then what I'll do is to divide options for those who want to engage in a self-directed learning project and go ahead and draft a learning contract for those who need more information first in the context of a lecture/discussion course. But the option is left open to the students in that case.

AU: Do you think it's possible to use those techniques in a university setting? I'm thinking of Athabasca University, where all of our students are adults. The average age of our students is 32 years old, and they come in wanting to participate in a degree program at the undergraduate level. Now, assuming that adult learners want to be able to take part in establishing their learning needs, can an institution that has eleven to twelve thousand students work through the kinds of techniques that you are suggesting?

Knowles: Yes, absolutely. There's a book, *The External Degree*, published by Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, listing some 42 fully accredited colleges and universities operating on the basis of external degrees, nonresidential degrees in this case. In 1985, The American Council on Education brought out a little book called *Guide to External Degree Programs in the United States*, second edition edited by Eugene Sullivan, in which 99 external degree programs are identi fied. These are undergraduate, fully accredited, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science programs using the andragogical model of self-directed learning. Many of them use learning contracts, which gives you some

indication of the rapidity with which this notion of treating adults as adults is spreading.

Many of these universities, though, have found that the typical adult comes into an undergraduate degree program with the expectation that he will be taught by didactic teachers and be thoroughly examined, because this has been his pre-conditioning from previous education experiences. So all of a sudden when the student is confronted with having to plan his own learning, he falls apart; it's high anxiety time. Most universities and colleges attracting adult students have found that they can avoid this by providing a short-term orientation program. Some of them call it 'learning-to-learn workshops,' and even in a three-hour period I have seen fundamental transformations with students becoming self-directed learners once they get a good orientation to the difference.

I have a book that came out in October of 1984 called *Andragogy in Action* that contains 32 case descriptions of programs of this sort. It describes exactly how universities and colleges have gone about making this transition from straight didactic classroom teaching to learner-involved training.

AU: How do non-self-actualized adults become self-directed learners and, therefore, presumably not require outlining objectives for their learning activities?

Knowles: The most prolific researcher on adult learning and adult learners is Allen Tough. His first book, *The Adult's Learning Project* asked "How do adults learn naturally?" That is, when they are not being taught. He found that learning is a universal, natural, and normal activity on the part of adults. In other words, adults do learn on their own. The problem is that they may not be motivated to learn what we want to teach them, and we have to make a strong case for the worth of a program's content in applying it to their lives. Learners will respond, but they have to be given the right opportunity before they can learn academic subject matter successfully on their own. They have to experience it before they'll understand it.

AU: Some of our experiences at Athabasca University are that students come in and ask us: "What good will a Bachelor of Arts degree with a concentration in sociology be in the market place? What will I be able to do after I've completed maybe six gruelling years of studying these courses at a distance?" One could look at that question and explore it with the student and, perhaps, determine that this person isn't motivated enough to embark on such a long haul for a degree that may or may not be recognized in the work place. How would you approach such a person?

Knowles: I think an effective technique is the one used by the Fielding Institute, of which I'm a member. It requires every newly admitted student to take a five-day workshop before starting his or her studies. In that time, successful students are brought in as resource people to explain from their own life experience the value of studying sociology and other nonvocational subjects. They tend to be a lot more convincing than professors.

AU: The field of adult education is experiencing tremendous growth with a great expansion of opportunities for adult educators across the education spectrum. However, there are few post-secondary educational programs devoted to the granting of degrees for self-directed learning; at least in Canada that seems to be the case. Those programs that do exist, though, are criticized for not having an academically sound curriculum. Do you think this criticism is justified? Has there been a shift in attitude toward the acceptance of adult education? And are there examples of this type of educational program being offered?

Knowles: Absolutely. Since the mid-60s, when the movement really started gaining momentum, the number of programs has grown like wild fire for several reasons. One is the changing demographics; we are getting to be an older and older population, so there are fewer teenagers who can come and live on campus full time for four years. Just for economic survival, more and more colleges and universities are having to recruit adult learners who, for the most part, can only study part time. This trend is growing so rapidly that by the year 2000 most degrees will be external degrees.

As we approach the twenty-first century in a world of accelerating change, it is unfair to students to turn them out knowing only how to learn from teachers.

In Canada, a pioneering institution for this is Holland College, which is located in Charlottesville, Prince Edward Island. They have gone into a totally modular self-paced program of undergraduate degrees. An even more well-known but more specialized institution is the McMaster University School of Medicine in Hamilton, Ontario, that has gone into a totally competency-based, self-paced modular system for training doctors. And they're finding that their products are far superior to those turned out by the classical medical schools. The McMaster University model, incidentally, is being imitated and adopted around the world now, in Australia and at the University of New England, for example. There is an organization in Vancouver, Challenge Education Associates, that is working with public school systems, elementary and secondary, to reorganize their curriculums and teach learning strategies based on the concept of challenging their students to excel. They've involved a wide variety of community resources, so that learning is not just taking place in school classrooms, but all over the community. The students develop learning plans indicating how they are going to make use of external resources as well as classroom resources, and they've just been having some outstanding successes.

AU: The assumption underlying andragogy seems to be that the learner knows how to communicate his needs to the instructor. Perhaps this is true

for some people, but for many people it's not. They don't have effective communication skills, nor do they have a well developed problem-solving orientation.

Knowles: There are even many needs they have that they don't know they have. I think that one of the critical elements of the andragogical model is what I call the self-diagnostic step. This is where the facilitator of learning or teacher provides learners with experiences and tools to help them become aware of needs that they may not know they have. There is, in fact, a whole area of technology devoted to this issue, but the best known proponent is Paulo Friere. In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* he describes some very effective techniques for helping even illiterate peasants become aware of things they could learn that would make the quality of their life richer, such as drawing pictures, looking at pictures, fantasizing, etc.

A tool which I use a lot of the time, especially in faculty development workshops, is what I call a learner's self-diagnostic rating scale, in which I list some 30 or 40 competencies that the facilitators of learning need to have. I then have them rate themselves in terms of what level they think they need to perform at or the goal they want to work toward. They also indicate at what level they think they have already reached that competency. Then I have them go through exercises like role playing and practice teaching, in which they reality-test their self-rating, and I also have them take their self-rating scale to three or four people who know them well.

But there are other ways of having people become conscious, what Paulo Friere calls consciousness raising. That is, to become conscious of needs they are not aware that they have.

AU: Do you think, then, that universities should be involved in helping students prepare for learning activities in the way that you have just suggested?

Knowles: Absolutely. I think that as we approach the twenty- first century in a world of accelerating change, it really is unfair to students to turn them out knowing only how to learn from teachers. Probably the most critical competency that schools and colleges should be helping people get is the competency of self-directed learning so that they can be life-long, self-directed learners.

AU: Is this what you are suggesting be included in the life-long learning resources system you once advocated?

Knowles: Absolutely. It's interesting to me that that model is being widely adopted in a number of developing countries, much more so than in the developed countries. Probably the explanation for this is that the developing countries have fewer traditions to hold them back, so they can start right out with new models. For example, Indonesia now has what they call a nonformal school system and a formal school system. The nonformal school system is organized very consciously around the andragogical model of self-directed learning, learner-centered learning, and so on. They are finding that kids enjoy and learn more in the nonformal system, and so they are getting a larger number of applications for admission.

AU: Do you think it would be beneficial to the whole area of adult education to get rid of the term 'adult' and instead talk about life-long learning and striving towards self-motivation and self-direction?

Knowles: I'm a little bit ambivalent about that. Life-long learning is coming into increasing use, of course, but literally, life-long learning means learning from birth until death, so it includes adult education. But it includes a great deal more than adult education. When I first got into the field in 1935, adult education had a connotation of being for under-educated people, illiterates, or functional illiterates. That connotation has disappeared and the term is being used today as a synonym for continuing education, another term that's coming into increasing prominence. Many universities have changed their divisions of adult education to divisions of continuing education. In England, they use the term further education. In industry, what they used to call training is now increasingly being called human resources development, because they've learned that while people don't like to be trained, they don't mind developing.

AU: There seems to be a great deal of overlap between the teaching styles and the learning styles of children and adults. Many children, in the Montessori schools and the open classroom in elementary schools, for example, are already self-directed. There are lots of people over the age of 18 who have to continue their learning with primary school techniques. Maybe we are doing ourselves and the adult population a disservice by calling this adult education.

Knowles: Language is a funny thing. A word that originally had one meaning has come to have different meanings. So I myself don't feel very strongly about the terminology, because people will come to understand what you have to offer them by being exposed to it.

AU: What suggestions would you give someone who is contemplating a career in adult education? What kind of formal education program would you recommend and what characteristics should one possess to be an effective adult educator?

Knowles: All of the really excellent adult educators that I know are people who value adventure more than security. If they put security ahead of everything, then they'll go into public school teaching or something of that sort, because adult education is an expanding, evolving field, full of ambiguity and so requires people who enjoy taking risks and having new experiences. Also, all the good adult educators that I know are people who just love being with people; adult education is a people-serving profession, and if they don't like people, they get out. Those are the two principal characteristics I would suggest.

Regarding preparation, I think that a broad liberal arts undergraduate's education is good and then a professional education through a graduate program. The graduate programs in adult education in Canada are located at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Toronto, the University of Saskatchewan, and, of course, the University of British Columbia. There are about 105 universities in the United States that have graduate programs in adult education.

For a list of their publications, write: Challenge Education Associates, 246 East 28 St., North Vancouver, B.C. V7N 1C2.

Self-Directed Learning:
The Role of the Educational Institution

An interview with Dr. Allen Tough

By Jane Brindley

As human beings we are all motivated to learn, whether within the context of a traditional educational setting or outside of it. Since 1963, this has been the central interest of Dr. Tough's work. He has been particularly interested in efforts that are self-guided and those that rely on help from peers. Dr. Tough is a professor of Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, teaching and continuing his research in adult learning, goal-setting, and major intentional change.

Dr. Tough's major publications include *The Adult's Learning Projects*, *Learning Without a Teacher* and *Expanding Your Life*. He has also contributed some twenty book chapters and journal articles to the professional literature and presented almost a hundred papers at conferences and seminars around the world.

He holds a bachelor's degree in psychology (University of Toronto), a master's degree in education and psychology (University of Toronto), and a Ph.D. in adult education (University of Chicago).

> "Men and women learn in many ways: by reading books, magazines, and newspapers; by watching television and movies; by seeking subject matter and advice from friends, relatives, neighbours, or fellow workers. ...
>
> "Sometimes the adult sets out to gain certain knowledge and skill because it will be highly useful in the very near future. At other times he simply wants to possess the knowledge and skill for its own sake, perhaps to have a broad understanding of the world around him."
>
> From *The Adult's Learning Projects*

Jane Brindley has been a counsellor and administrator with Athabasca University for over ten years. She is currently manager of Athabasca University's Northern Regional Office in Edmonton. Jane has an M.A. in Counselling Psychology from the University of British Columbia, and has recently carried out a major research project with adult students in the area of motivation and attrition.

AU: I want to ask you first of all about your start in the field of adult education, because you are one of the people who has been considered a radical at the beginning of this field. And you are certainly viewed as one of the pioneers of adult education in Canada.

Tough: Well, it's very simple. I started out as a high school teacher following in my father's footsteps, and at the end of my first year, my boss asked me if I would also like to teach an evening course to adults in public speaking. I said, "Sure, it sounds like fun." I found I actually enjoyed teaching adults even more than teaching kids, so when I went into graduate work, I majored in adult education.

AU: Was that when you began to conceive of the idea of adult education as a 'movement' or did that come much later?

Tough: That actually came about in the second year of my graduate work. By then, I was at the University of Chicago, because at that time there was nowhere in Canada to get a doctorate in education. The professor there gave us a very simple assignment, which was to take his program planning steps and apply them to any adult learning situation. I decided to apply those steps to my own program of self-education, brushing up on my French in order to pass the Ph.D. French exam. As I looked at my own learning project I discovered that I had gone through all the steps that a teacher usually performs for the student. It aroused my curiosity, and I eventually did a thesis on that very topic. So it was really just that one class assignment that got me interested in the field.

AU: That's when you first conceived of the idea of learning projects?

Tough: Right. In the beginning I called them self-teaching projects, and then later on I developed the concept of learning projects, which includes learning in a course or from a professional instructor as well as self-directed learning.

AU: Is that concept still the basis for your work in adult education?

Tough: Yes, it is. I haven't changed it at all. Once I latched onto the learning project notion, it seemed to be a powerful and useful way to look at things.

AU: Some of the critics of your work suggest that the idea of every adult being a self-directed learner is a fallacy. Others say that even if adults are self-directed learners, knowing this means as little as knowing that most people wash every day and that what we need to know more about is behaviour within educational settings, not what people will do on their own. How do you respond to these kinds of criticisms?

Tough: Well, to answer the first one, we actually have not found that all adults are self-directed learners. In almost any group at least four per cent, and more often around 10 per cent or even higher, have not been involved in learning projects of any kind, self-directed or otherwise. So in that sense, we've never actually claimed that everyone is a self-directed learner, but we do claim that 90 per cent of people usually are—that's what the data show.

There are two reasons why I think it's worth studying self-directed learning. One is that it's a fascinating, curious, and intriguing phenomenon in its own right. The other reason is that it has many implications for institutional and classroom learning. That certainly happened to me in my own teaching. The more I've listened to people talk about their own learning and their own successes, the more I've changed as a graduate school instructor.

Most of us as instructors do too much for the student. We take full responsibility for the what and the how of learning.

AU: Can you give us some examples of that?

Tough: Most of us as instructors do too much for the student. We take full responsibility for planning objectives, choosing resources, and planning and guiding both the what and the how of learning. What I've done, and what some of my colleagues here at OISE are doing, is try to break away from that traditional situation where the teacher has very high control. Although we use different approaches for self-directed learning, each of us in one way or another is trying to encourage the students to use the competence, skill, and power we know they have. When we study them outside educational institutions, we see they are doing all kinds of learning and planning on their own. So then we begin to wonder why we should plan for them in an educational institution as they seem to be doing quite well themselves.

AU: What you are arguing for, then, is that we must learn from people who are learning on their own and apply that within our educational settings.

Tough: Exactly. I've always earned my living as an instructor in educational institutions—I certainly don't want them abolished!

AU: That leads us to the next question, which is about the words 'education' and 'learning' and the way they are used within adult education. Some adult education writers do not use the word 'education' at all, only the word 'learning', or they may use the words interchangeably. In your view, are there differences, and if so, how would you define them?

Tough: This is partly why I became interested in researching the field in the first place. I was finding the literature confusing, and I wanted to sort it out for myself. But, rather than looking at definitions, what I was really concerned with was 'learning effort' as a concept. In other words, people's highly deliberate, highly intentional effort to learn something. Sometimes the individual chooses to do that in a small, informal group or in a class in an institution. So although a lot of people are obviously interested in the institutional part of learning, the part to which they apply the label 'education', it's actually a much

broader psychological phenomenon.

AE: I'd like to ask you about 'distance education', the kind of education we are offering at Athabasca University. Adults first come to us highly motivated, anticipating certain benefits, and then about 50 per cent of them choose not to complete. What do we know about the difference between the motivation to begin a learning project and the motivation to persist?

Tough: What we know from a book called *Why Adults Learn* is that people usually have more reasons for continuing than for beginning. In other words, as they go through the learning process, they seem to develop additional motivation. They find that it's more useful than they thought or more interesting. But what I suspect may be going on at Athabasca University is that the student's learning project is different from the distance education course that's being offered. This person may not feel that he or she is a drop-out, but that they have completed the amount of learning they want. They have completed their own learning project, and it just happened that the course goes on longer, but they didn't need the additional part of it. If somebody goes into a library, nobody gets upset if they don't read every book in it, so I would not get upset just because people don't finish a course. If they have obtained what they want from it, then that's great.

AE: I guess what we're not sure of is whether they have obtained from us what they were seeking in the first place. I'd like to pursue this a little bit further in terms of something that you said in your book *Intentional Changes*. You described the type of person who is most likely to be successful in carrying out intentional change, and you described some competencies which could be taught. But then you went on to describe some characteristics which probably can't be taught, at least not directly. For example, how do you teach somebody to be "loose and flowing"? Are there certain coping mechanisms that some adults have learned and some have not?

Tough: I'm not sure what actually enables some people to learn faster and more successfully and to leap over obstacles instead of being stumped by them. As you pointed out, some of it may be inborn or developed at an early age, so we can't do much about it. At the same time, though, we can help people understand their own patterns, their own obstacles, their own typical difficulties as well as help them learn all kinds of coping skills and ways to motivate themselves.

AE: We should probably be looking at that on an individual basis and having the learner assess his own learning style and needs.

Tough: Right.

AE: Although you point out a number of times in your work that only a small percentage of the adult population learns for credit, you don't say a great deal about it. What do you think learning for credit tells us about the behaviour of students in structured educational settings?

We can help people understand their own patterns, their own obstacles, their own typical difficulties as well as help them learn coping skills and ways to motivate themselves.

Tough: I think people learning for credit is a very important part of higher education and adult education. I see people changing and learning enormously in credit based programs, and I think they are very powerful and successful. The reason I haven't written a lot on this subject is that everybody else seems to be addressing it. I felt that the other 90 or 95 per cent of adult learning had been neglected, so I decided to write about that instead.

The most fascinating thing we've discovered about learners in a structured educational setting is that they do have their own goals and their own strategies, and somehow, we as educators don't always pay attention to that. But when educators do pay attention and encourage learners to set their own goals, there's a whole lot of energy, a whole lot of power, a whole lot of sky rockets. Students go shooting off in all kinds of directions that are exciting to them and end up learning exactly the kind of things that you want them to learn. So there's a lack of fit between what students are capable of doing and what most of the educational institutions encourage or allow them to do.

AE: You are almost saying that students learn despite the institution.

Tough: Right. Institutions seem to put a governor or damper on learning.

AE: That leads to the next question I wanted to ask because I think you've made some excellent suggestions on how institutions should change such as reducing the emphasis on credit. However the university system in Canada is built upon tradition and evolves very slowly, if at all.

And while credit university courses may not satisfy some learners' personal needs, those courses may be necessary to fulfil a longer term goal, such as a degree for career purposes. Given the existing system, what kinds of services should be offered to youth and to adult university students to facilitate learning within a very structured system, and are there support services outside the classroom we should be offering adult students?

Tough: I feel there are two types of support services that we should be offering. One is helping learners set their goals. You mentioned that many students take courses to achieve a long term goal, and it seems to me that we could help a lot of those students in a workshop or one-to-one counselling situation or through printed materials. We could clarify just why they want to take certain courses, what kind of competency or knowledge they want to gain, and what they are going to do with their new learning. By helping them get a broader, long term vision of their goals, they would make better choices in the courses, projects, and assignments they undertake. Then they may feel just that much more motivated to go through the program and complete it.

The other service should be helping students become even more competent

at planning and learning. I've said earlier that people are already remarkably competent at this, but most people report that they feel they could become even better at setting goals, planning strategy, motivating themselves, finding the tools, getting help from people, and so on. The closest we've come to that till now is to teach study skills, how to break up your time, how to gain what you want from a book, and so on. So, although we do a bit of it now I think we should take a broader approach.

AE: A learning how to learn program.

Tough: And learning how to plan as well.

AE: I was recently on campus at a large Canadian university, where I spoke with a number of graduate students in the department of adult education. I heard over and over again the complaint that they were learning the principles of adult education but were being taught in a very traditional manner. Students reported that in response to their concerns, they were told by faculty that they were studying at an institution of higher education, not adult education. What are your views on how adult educators should acquire the skills and knowledge required to work in this field?

Tough: It's true that inside a graduate school of education or a large university, there are all kinds of restrictions and pressures and requirements. I don't find those particularly burdensome, but I certainly would teach a different way if I were teaching a noncredit course in adult education in a church basement or in a YMCA, where there were no restrictions, no need to have grades. But what I've been doing in my teaching and what some of my colleagues have been doing is trying to implement some of the good principles of adult learning in our courses, even though we are institutions of higher education. We've encouraged students to be responsible, to a large extent, for their own learning. To be more exact, we feel that we are partners with our students in goal-setting and strategy-planning, and we use flip charts and needs assessments and a whole lot of other tools that are typical of adult education.

AE: I'd like to ask you a question about adult education as an academic discipline. Many adult educators choose their work, not just as a career or field of study, but because there's a certain fervor attached to it—much like a movement. What effect has that had on adult education as an academic discipline?

Tough: That's a fascinating question and a very important distinction. I think, at its best, adult education should combine the two elements that you are talking about. It has to be an academic field if it is to be offered in a graduate school with its own research programs and bodies of theory and knowledge. Although I think the field is losing its fervor, it has to have a sense of social mission—the commitment, the excitement, a belief in the power of adult education to bring about change in a country like Canada.

We should be aiming for a whole panorama of opportunities, methods, and resources from which adult learners can choose.

AE: Why do you think that the fervor is being lost from adult education? What's happening to change that?

Tough: I'm not completely sure. A couple of things come to mind. One is that some of the pioneers have died, such as Ned Corbett, Roby Kidd, Courtney Bartlet, and others who had a very broad vision of the impact that our field could have on a society. The other is that we are becoming more technical, we are becoming more skilled and that's good. We should learn how to set objectives and make assessments. But I guess some people get so wrapped up in the technical end and the marketing and the budgeting, that they lose sight of what it was all about in the first place.

AE: I'd like to ask you some questions about trends evolving in the field. One of the things we all see is more people carrying out research in adult education, and as a result of that there are a number of different theories emerging. With educators, students, and other practitioners all doing research, it sometimes seems that we are all over the map. Where do you see this leading in terms of theory development and practice?

Tough: I'm like you, I see it as all over the map. I don't see any clear trends and patterns, except that the research is becoming more in-depth and more powerful. But I couldn't predict what the hot topics are going to be ten years from now or which theories are going to be developed most.

AE: What about in your work? What's the focus of your current work?

Tough: Well, I'm excited about two things at the moment. One is intentional change which is a broader phenomenon than intentional learning. I haven't lost interest in intentional learning, but I'm fascinated with the whole scope of intentional changes people bring about in themselves and in their lives. The other interest is potential futures for humanity and the implications of those for adult education and its practice.

AE: What would you consider to be examples of some other very innovative adult education projects?

Tough: Well, what I've come across is innovative in its content, not in method, and that's concerning the question of peace and war and nuclear weapons. I'm delighted that adult educators are starting to pay more attention to that, because it seems rather crucial for the continuation of our society and our species. Adults should be encouraged and helped to look at this situation so they can understand it and sort out their own ways of doing something, whether it's simply writing a couple of letters or getting more heavily involved. So that's one of the real innovations I see.

AE: I wonder if I could just go back and relate what you are saying now to something you said earlier about the whole idea of adult education being

very important to our future. Maybe you could give us a broader view of that.

Tough: I'm struck by how almost any human activity can be enhanced by learning. Certainly, it's hard to imagine an organization functioning if the people who work in it don't keep learning how to do new things, how to solve problems and so on. Here in Ontario, there's a great emphasis by the current government on technology. It sees that as the key to Ontario's future, which involves programs of research and implementation. These are basically the learning projects we are talking about: people's efforts to discover new principles, new techniques, and new practices and learning how to implement them. If you switch the focus to child rearing, the family, sports, hobbies, or recreation, you'll find the same thing. People are more effective and they are often happier if they learn in order to perform better or understand things better.

AE: Are there any dangerous trends in adult education today?

Tough: Well, to be perfectly frank, the most dangerous development I see is an overemphasis in some institutions on marketing to the neglect and detriment of all other aspects of those institutions. All efforts seem to be geared towards attracting people who will pay for courses, and sometimes that means the quality of the courses suffers. What people actually learn and how useful that is to them is neglected. The biggest concern I have about the field is that we will become preoccupied with the number of students and the numbers of dollars and that institutions will become obsessed with how to grow and how to attract more people, without paying enough attention to what it is these students are learning and whether this is useful.

AE: I'd like to follow up on that a bit. As I was reading through your work again, I wondered about the necessity of continuing education and noncredit courses. If people are self-directed and can find their own resources, they will probably be able to learn without taking a course and paying money for it. It seems to me that a lot of institutions are using their continuing education programs to fund other programs within the universities. Do you still think that continuing education and noncredit programs are necessary?

Tough: Yes, I think both noncredit and credit programs are extremely important. Basically, I'm in favour of adults having as wide a range of courses available as possible. What we should be aiming for is a whole panorama of opportunities, methods, and resources from which adult learners can choose. I think continuing education, or noncredit courses, have to be part of that program as well as good public libraries and all kinds of informal courses and programs. I would not want to see any part of that panorama cut back, because I think that every method, every program, is useful to some people, who are going to learn better from it than they would in any other way.

AE: So, what you are saying then is make these courses available but don't market them in such a way that people are taking on learning resources that they don't really need.

Tough: Right. And don't market them with advertising that misleads or promises too much or gets people to believe that the program is going to be something more than it really turns out to be.

AE: I think that drives home the necessity of evaluating programs and the dilemma in not knowing why a student has dropped out. He or she may have gotten what was wanted in the course without the credits, but we're left in a position of not being able to know whether we met that student's needs. How can we get around that, how can we institute the kind of evaluation program which will help us to assess how well we are meeting learning needs?

Tough: Well, I think it would be very useful to send some sort of questionnaire, one page at the most, to people after they had dropped out or finished a course, asking what they gained and how useful it was. It would be even better if you could telephone a few people and have a conversation with them. Some of the work on drop-out with high school kids has found that if they are just given a brief chance to explain why they've dropped out, they say it was because of money or that they wanted a job. But if you give them 10, 15, or 20 minutes to talk about it, there usually is a whole different set of reasons. So if you could attend a telephone call with even 10 people who have dropped out you might discover an enormous amount.

AE: Dr. Tough, since you've been in the field of adult education for some time, I'd like to know what the most important knowledge is that you've acquired as a result of your work in adult education. Are there ideas and concepts that stand out for you, is there one important piece of knowledge you've gained, or perhaps is there some myth that's been exploded through your research?

Tough: Well, there are two or three things. One is that adults are much more involved in learning than we used to think. We used to be impressed if one adult in five took a course in a year, and now we realize that nine out of ten adults are making some sort of highly deliberate effort to learn something each year. Many of them are learning five or six different subjects and spending an average of 100 hours on each one. So this represents a major effort to learn.

The other thing that's come out of listening to people talk about their learning is the sense of competence and power they have as adult learners. They have a remarkable ability to figure out what they need to know, to raise their kids better, to do their job better, to understand Canadian society, or whatever it is. They can figure out how to get that knowledge, how to gain that skill, and even how to evaluate it, and then they just seem to go ahead and do it. Sure they hit obstacles, sure they get frustrated sometimes. But there is just an incredible amount of learning going on out there in Canadian society, and sometimes we as educators forget about that. We notice only the people who are coming to us and are sitting in our classrooms. But we forget about the people who are not coming and sitting in our classrooms, so it's just a remarkable phenomenon, bubbling up all across Canada. What we have to do, I think, is determine how we fit into that process and help it, foster it, facilitate it – but not control it – so that it can become even more successful and more efficient. ❖

Major Trends in Adult Education

An Interview with Dr. K. Patricia Cross

By Maxim Jean-Louis

Dr. Patricia Cross is a social psychologist whose work in the fields of adult and post-secondary education has been recognized for its outstanding contributions, particularly for her theory on the 'blended life plan,' in which it is noted that we tend to combine work and study throughout our lifetime more so than in the past.

Selected by over 4,000 educators as one of the 44 outstanding leaders of higher education in America, she is most well known for "shaping educational programs for the nontraditional learner and . . . major research into new evaluation approaches for educational programs."

Currently, Dr. Cross is a professor at the Graduate School of Education, University of California. She has served as president of the American Association of Higher Education, vice chair of the National Academy of Education, vice chair of the American Council on Education Commission on Women in Higher Education, chair of Administration, Planning and Social Policy at Harvard University.

Dr. Cross has authored five books and more than 100 articles on adult learners, community colleges, nontraditional education and the future of higher education.

> "The programs of industry, once confined to full-time working adults, and the programs of colleges, once confined largely to dependent postadolescents, are now serving roughly the same market. Formerly full-time workers are becoming part-time students, and formerly full-time students are becoming part-time workers. The result is that increasing numbers of people—young, middle-aged, and elderly—are combining work and study during the life span."
>
> From *Adult Learning, State Policies and Institutional Practices*

AU: Perhaps I should start by saying the general purpose of this interview is to identify the major trends and patterns in adult education today. One trend that you've identified in your book, *Adult As Learner*, is the tendency for people today to combine leisure, work, and education in a pattern beyond what you call the 'linear life plan'. That is, education for the young, work for the

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middle years, and leisure for the elderly. I wonder perhaps if you could elaborate on that for us.

Cross: Well, actually there are really three types of life plan that appear in the literature. There's the 'linear,' which you just referred to as the traditional separation of education for the young, work for the middle years of life, and then forced leisure for the elderly. Then there's what you call the 'cyclic,' which is a term that is often used to indicate a redistribution of work, education, and leisure into smaller periods of time, and that's a frequently used term in Europe along with the concept of recurrent education. It suggests the notion of adults returning to school in recurrent patterns which make up certain cycles, but that's really different from the term I introduced, which is the 'blended life plan.'

The blended life plan is intended to suggest that there are parallel periods of time devoted to education, whether in the adult or later years. In other words, education would run throughout life. It would be more or less full time when one was a child, but it would be a continuing activity through middle age and through old age. So the blended life plan is intended to make these three strands of life's activities go on concurrently throughout life. Education, work, and leisure are part of everyone's life, no matter what their age. People are living longer and healthier lives so that they don't want to simply retire to a time of enforced leisure when they are 65.

AU: Dr. Cross, how widespread is the tendency toward a blended life plan in North America?

Cross: Well, I think there is a great variety of forces in society that are eroding the linear life plan with the blended life plan emerging as the new alternative. In the first place, people are living longer and healthier lives so that they don't want to simply retire to a time of enforced leisure when they are 65. Some older people are choosing to keep on working; some of them to reduce the work in to half time; and some to filling their lives with educational activities, travel, and volunteer work. Governments in North America, I suspect in other nations as well, have responded to this by abolishing the concept of mandatory retirement, that there is a time when people must retire. So the concept of late life leisure has been eroded and pushed back into the middle years, so that people are engaging in increased leisure along with their work life.

What I think has eroded the work life as a solid portion of the middle years is the increase of part-time workers and part-time learners. Especially with the two-career family, people are introducing something besides uninterrupted work over the years between 20, let's say, and 65.

If alternative providers are not to engage in rather destructive competition, it seems to me there will have to be more co-operation within a network of life-long learning providers.

AU: I wonder if one can find evidence of the blended life plan in Europe as well.

Cross: I frankly have to say I've not looked at that literature. I would suspect so although the Europeans are somewhat more likely to use the term cyclic on recurrent education. The problem with that is it suggests one has to study full time, even though it may be at age 40.

AU: What implications would such patterns have on the initiatives being taken by institutions of higher learning in adult education? Do you see the university having to readapt its curriculum?

Cross: The most obvious implication, one that most institutions have responded to, is the notion of such simple kinds of administrative changes as scheduling. For example, moving a course for adults from the hours of 10:00 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, to the hours of 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. on Monday evenings. That's an obvious need when you have part-time learners and one that is growing all the time. In fact, part-time students in colleges are going to be the majority probably by about the early 1990s. They are already, in the U.S., up to 42 per cent of the college student population studying for credits. Soon, it's likely to be the majority, certainly before the turn of the century.

AU: Are there other significant changes you see happening today to accommodate adult learners?

Cross: I tend to take a somewhat broader perspective. But it seems to me the biggest impact on adult learners is the explosive growth in the sheer number and volume of providers of adult education: employers, the military volunteer agencies, and private entrepreneurs, to name a few. Adult learners today are not dependent on any one source for education. In fact, if those alternative providers are not to engage in rather destructive competition, it seems to me there will have to be more co-operation within a network of life-long learning providers.

AU: Can you elaborate on that for us? Do you see more networking happening?

Cross: Yes. It's occurring in particular between industry and institutions of higher education, and it occurs in numerous ways. Sometimes a company may want a given skill or information taught to a group of employees, in which case it's usually easier to contract with an educational institution that specializes in that skill, rather than set up its own educational division. And that's what I would really call a network. That is, the providers get together and decide what is the most efficient and useful way for employers to teach the skills they want taught. I think very soon government will also join this kind of network as well as volunteer agencies. Instead of

single educational organizations having education as their primary function, many other organizations are going to have education as one part of their function.

AU: Dr. Cross, there are some developments that you've considered to be rather dangerous. Would you identify some of them for us please?

Cross: One of them would be the credentialism that seems to be creeping into much of adult education today. Instead of people learning because they want to know, or because it's a good way to spend their leisure time, or for self-improvement, there's a growing tendency to want a certificate that you can show your employer. That, I think, can become destructive because it puts education into a purely instrumental mode and gets people thinking only in terms of the certificate being worthwhile. Teachers in the humanities are suffering now, because everybody thinks that education must lead to something else. So I think that's an unfortunate trend.

I think another danger comes from the pressure for mandated continuing education in various kinds of licensed professions—accounting, nursing, and so forth. That's where you're required to keep up to speed in your profession by taking a certain number of required courses or required hours in a year. I think that's a bad trend. Not that it's bad to ask people to keep up, but because it's highly dubious whether people who are required to learn something do much more than put in seat time. Instead of making education internally motivated, it tends to put all the motivation on the external—"you have to do it."

I suppose another unfortunate trend—one that I have already alluded to—is the growing complication among the various providers of education. There seem to be so many in this act now, and some are using questionable recruitment methods, such as giving credit. Now I have absolutely no objection to giving credit for what would be called appropriate learning experiences, but using credit as a recruitment device seems to me somewhat questionable for the entire profession of education.

Yet another trend is the blurring of educational functions. We now have corporations setting up full-scale degree granting programs. Today, you can get a bachelor's and a master's degree from corporate colleges and increasingly you can get noncredit courses from educational institutions. So we've actually blurred the mission of the various providers of educational services. Now I don't necessarily think that's a bad trend either, but we are going to have to attend to it if we are to provide life-long learning opportunities efficiently.

AU: I'd like to ask you how women fit into adult education. Do you see adult education playing a positive role in helping women fulfill themselves or acquire better skills?

To require learning in the absence of any motivation has to be self-defeating, because it ruins the experience of learning.

Cross: Oh, absolutely. Adult education today serves a bold instrumental purpose for women right now, since there's a rather large accumulation of what might be called undereducated women—those who did not go to college in the 1960s when so many of their brothers were. Women now are going to college in equal numbers as men—it's about 50-50 in terms of the student population—and they are currently the primary constituents for adult education. Women between the ages of 25 and 45 are not only making up for lost time, they are also returning to the labour market because there are new opportunities for well-educated women that did not exist before.

AU: I'm presently working on a project in rural Alberta, where I've been involved with educational programming for the elderly and rural women. The biggest dilemma that I've had to face is convincing people—be they 25 or 80—that they are not too old to learn. Can you give us some ideas in this regard?

Cross: Well, I certainly agree with your observation that people have this notion that they are too old to learn. But one of the things that I find extremely interesting is that this business of adults going back to school has become so much a part of our accepted society. If you watch the situation comedies on television, I noticed the other night for instance, virtually every woman portrayed as a mother and a wife, and sometimes a career woman, was taking off for a course. She was either teaching one or taking one, and it was interesting that by the time this kind of family life style appears on television, it really has become a part of the fabric of society. If people see their neighbours and characters they identify with on television taking courses, I think fewer and fewer people will feel they are too old to learn.

And I think in one sense this carries its own momentum. The more people go back to school, the more other people will observe them and say, "Well if Sally can do it, so can I." As a matter of fact, that's been shown in the research. In areas of the United States where there are very high levels of adult education, people are less likely to say they are too old to learn than in states where it is much less prevalent, the rural states usually.

AU: One thing you talked about is the destructive influence of mandating in continuing education. My concern is for the life-long learner whose needs aren't suited to what the universities or colleges have to offer. How much damage is being done to these people by insisting that they be motivated to learn from this college, to do this course? Is it okay for people to 'life-long learn' by themselves?

Cross: Well, I think it is. It is so

clear that if you are to learn anything, you have to be motivated to do it, and so long as we can create the motivation, that's fine. But to require learning in the absence of any motivation has to be self-defeating, because it ruins the experience of learning.

It seems to me we ought to be working on how we can increase the motivation to learn. For example, one of the best ways for a teacher to become really good is to teach a volunteer class. We don't know how poor the teaching is or how it fails to meet needs when a class is required and when people are there only because they have to take it. One of the best stimuli for good teaching is a voluntary audience who are there because they want to learn what you have to teach.

AU: When you talk about the motivation of adults to learn, what about the field of adult education in general? Do you have any views on the theories driving the research in adult education today?

Cross: In my earlier book *Adults As Learners* I proposed a core model of motivation, which stands for the entire chain of responses, on the grounds that it is probably too early to look for a single element that motivates adults to learn. And so I had a number of hypotheses on creating motivation for learning. One of them, for instance, was based on early experiences in school. If learning had always been very painful or embarrassing, people would be afraid to let loose and learn on their own and would only respond to teacher-mandated requirements. If learning became associated with unpleasant activities, you would not likely seek it out, as opposed to the young person who has very pleasant recollections of school and therefore was eager to go back as an adult.

Another factor is what the people around you think of your learning experiences. Do you have a supportive family for instance? Do your friends admire you for going back to school, or are they disdainful? What's more, the evidence seems to indicate that people who are making life changes are much more motivated to learn than those people who are in a relatively stable period of life. And, too, there are the rewards you expect to get out of continuing education. All of these are stimuli and motivating factors, and in the book I was encouraging other researchers not to look for what might be called demotivation factors, but for multiples and patterns of events in one's life.

AU: Let's go back to mandated education and women in the work force, who often return after raising families for 20 years. Would it not be an option for these women, who are trying to integrate their family life with educational activities, to provide them with credentials to take back into the job market?

Cross: Absolutely. You are referring to giving credit for appropriate experience.

AU: Not only life experience; it could also be legitimate courses, workshops, and so forth. It might be that they are volunteering at a crisis center, for example, but this experience is not given much credit by employers.

Cross: Well, I absolutely agree. The only reservation I have about that though is it tends to perpetuate credentialism. The ultimate answer is to be able to measure competence much more accurately than we can now. In fact, I would suggest that when this happens, women with these kinds of experiences will probably be recognized for having greater competence in a certain field than people with only a lecture-oriented classroom background. There's a lot we know about learning that indicates the motivation and the involvement is higher for those women whereas somebody taking a classroom class for credit might be only minimally involved.

So I think where one can measure a kind of competence, then it is to everyone's advantage. It means we can use any kind of education that's appropriate to developing competence, rather than using only a given certified form of classroom instruction. I'm convinced, as no doubt many psychologists are, that some of the most valuable learning experiences are taking place not in classrooms but in all kinds of self- and group-motivated activities. How to address questions, how to analyze not only data but arguments, how to synthesize information. Those are going to be the important skills.

AU: Have you identified certain areas of research that you find very exciting or very promising for the future of adult learning?

Cross: I recently attended an international gathering of 16 scholars in a working conference entitled *Learning How To Learn*. It was organized by Professor Robert Smith of North Illinois University, and we met for three days to talk about the basic concept behind life-long learning—"How do you really learn and how do you continue learning?" I think these are important questions, especially in undergraduate and adult education these days, where we know the translation of information is becoming very futile and that the concept of life-long learning must be different. How to address questions, how to analyze not only data but arguments, how to synthesize information. Those are going to be the important skills, which we referred to as the 'process of learning' as opposed to the 'product actual information' that becomes rapidly outdated. That's one of the more exciting concepts that I was involved in recently with respect to research. And I think Professor Smith was encouraged enough from the results of the conference that he has obtained funding for a follow-up conference next year. Perhaps it should become an annual event.

AU: Dr. Cross, to conclude, what is your next book going to be about? What is your present area of interest?

Cross: Well, right now I'm working on a concept that I call the 'classroom researcher'. While students need feedback on their performance as learners, teachers also need feedback on their performance as teachers. One of the ways to receive this is to get the response of learners to the learning activity.

This new research interest will take me closer into the realm of traditional education, and it should have an impact on traditional teachers in elementary and secondary schools and colleges. From the perspective of the college, how do we prepare young people for a future as life-long learners? I think it has to be a different teaching style and much of the impact of that is going to be made by traditional teachers in traditional classrooms.

Learning and Education: A Crucial Difference

An Interview with Dr. Roger Boshier

By Virginia Nilsson

As a researcher and author on adult education, as well as an activist, Dr. Boshier believes that access to education should be an inalienable human right. This belief forms the basis of his vision for a truly open learning society.

Dr. Boshier is a professor in the department of Administrative Adult and Higher Education, University of British Columbia. Born in Hastings, New Zealand, he attended the Wellington Teachers College and the Victoria University of Wellington, where he received his Ph.D.

He came to Canada in 1974 and in 1976 won the prestigious Adult Education Association (U.S.A.) Imogene Okes Award for Outstanding Research in Adult Education. Since then, he has contributed to various UNESCO International Conferences on Adult Education, and has authored and edited many books and papers.

> "For many people, primary and secondary school was fraught with bad experiences leaving an indelible distaste for environments and techniques which resemble pre-adult education. Sometimes adults enter a learning environment expecting to be treated like children and will often resist attempts to reinforce self-directed learning. Yet if the instructor or facilitator yields to the temptation to classing participants into a dependent role, he will experience withdrawal and resentment."
>
> From *Towards a Learning Society*

AU: Malcolm Knowles makes a distinction between 'andragogy' or adult education, and 'pedagogy' or pre-adult education. I think that pre-adult education has many similarities in its methods of delivery to adult education, for instance, the use of open classrooms, which is predicated on the adult education concept of self-direction. Can we use such similarities to support the idea of life-long learning, rather than talking about adult versus pre-adult learning?

Boshier: The answer to that question is yes and no. In the long term, yes. In a utopian future, we would have a learning society based on the proper implementation of the principles of life-long education. It would no longer be necessary to make the distinctions we currently make between pre-adult and adult education, which are based largely on assumptions that we make about the special roles of adults and children. But in the short term, the answer to your question is no. It's too dangerous to do away with these distinctions because whenever it's done, the pre-adult educators tend to dominate. We are constantly fighting a battle in our own faculty of education, and we are one of the larger and better known adult education groups in North America, if not the world. We are constantly being urged to fold up our tent on the fringes of campus and move into the education building. We resist that, because whenever budget cuts come or whenever there's a decision that could infringe upon us, adult education seems to pay a heavier price than pre-adult education.

However, I also believe there are some real differences between adults and children, not so much with their psychology or the way in which they

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Her degrees in psychology from Columbia University and the University of Alberta provide a behavioral perspective to her interest in the adult independent learner.

At Athabasca University Dr. Nilsson has been involved in course development and delivery as well as in academic advising and student counselling. She presently coordinates the Athabasca University Learning and Study Skills Assistance Program.

learn, but in the ideological basis of pre-adult and adult education. There are major differences between the purposes of adult and pre-adult education and, like Malcolm Knowles, I believe that adults occupy different social roles than children. This difference really influences the character of the adult education process. In fact, it's probably the most powerful variable that make adult education processes different from those of pre-adult education.

I do a great deal of writing and go around the world, promoting the idea of vertical integration within the context of life-long education. This really means the breaking down, the tearing away, of artificial and outdated age, gender, and other barriers that impede the ability of people to drop in and out of education, both formal and nonformal, throughout life. But I'm not prepared to go all the way just yet, because I don't believe that adult education is well enough understood by the pre-adult educator establishments and by the education businessmen who have a vested interest in ensuring that not too much self-directed learning goes on in nonformal settings.

AU: We know that all adults are always learning. But how does this apply in developing countries, where even though people may not be banging on the doors of an adult education institute, they probably want to learn? Is it our responsibility to ensure that they are taught? And where do you think the responsibility lies for motivating the individual?

Boshier: Well, I have two responses to that. I spent twenty years wading through the morass known as motivation, and I concluded that it's not a valid concept. It's just another manifestation of the tendency to blame the victim. As far as I'm concerned, there's no such thing as an unmotivated human being, but there are lots of people who are subjected to unstimulating and boring educators who simply extinguish their curiosity.

To take your question more seriously, where does the responsibility lie? I think the responsibility lies with educational planners and those who administer institutions. We who work in institutions must realize that we have a role in fostering education within nonformal settings. The kind of demarcation that those espousing life-long education make between formal, nonformal, and informal settings does not mean that we have no responsibilities beyond turning people loose in the misguided belief that everybody is so self-directed and self-motivated that somehow they are going to find their way to what they need to learn. I think that Malcolm Knowles and Allan Tough have probably done us a bit of a disservice in promoting the idea that adults left alone will somehow take the initiative and start learning. I have great doubt about the extent to which all of the self-directed learning that Allan Tough claims actually goes on. In fact, I have a big problem with the whole notion of self-directed learning, because to me it's a nonissue. Learning, by definition, is self-directed. That nearly 100 per cent of the population engage in it is not meaningful at all. It's rather comparable to saying that nearly 100 per cent of the population wash themselves when they get up in the morning.

There is a distinction between learning and education. Society decided early that although a lot of learning goes on in what we usually call a societal institution, we also learn just through daily life: talking to friends, reading the newspaper, getting up in the morning, and so on. Society introduced school systems when they decided that this kind of incidental learning was too casual to perform the tasks necessary to make the society run. In fact, we decided that school was going to be compulsory, that children should be kept in school for so many years.

The school system was based upon the recognition that learning in natural societal settings is not very efficient, and upon the Freudian idea that the child is the father of man. Ironically, you wouldn't know that Freud's clients were mostly women from this statement of his. Freudian psychology is no longer a particularly useful or valid way of describing adult development, because there's all sorts of evidence that shows adults are quite capable of making very dramatic changes in their lives. If you're carrying a few scars from childhood because your father didn't love you, it doesn't mean you have to carry them for the rest of your life. Moreover, there is all sorts of evidence that shows adults can actually learn better than children in many ways, mostly because they have a body of experience to which they can link new learning.

But we have to recognize that the continuation of the school system today doesn't have anything to do with the psychology of the child. It has more to do with the school acting as a babysitting agency, and keeping young people off the streets and out of the work force in times of high unemployment. What we need to do is facilitate the possibility of dropping in and out of education over the life cycle, and I use the word education there very deliberately. We have to create a learning society where people can drop in and out of many very highly differentiated settings where education occurs.

AU: I'm interested in the idea that people are either growth-motivated or deficiency-motivated. What determines whether a person is growth- or deficiency-motivated, and do you have to be one or the other?

Boshier: Maslow used to claim that you couldn't be both. Before he died, though, he backed away from that a little and claimed that growth motivation was a temporary space that all of us could fall in and out of from time to time. You'll notice that I haven't done very much with that concept in recent years, and it's because I have some misgivings about it. I think the distinction between growth and deficiency may not be a particularly valid one, although in an article published in the *International Journal of Life Long Education*, I tried to use something like that notion to describe behaviour at the societal rather than the individual level.

In that article, I tried to explain motives for participation in adult education. That's quite a different phenomenon than motivation for persistence as in, say, a classroom setting. Although there are some who claim that motivation for persistence is just a continuation of what causes people to participate in the first place, I don't think so. I think that once we get them there, then there's all sorts of things that we can do to deal with so-called lack of motivation.

There's still an assumption that learners' minds are empty, and our task as experts is to somehow fill them up.

But, as I said before, I don't find that to be a particularly valid conflict. In fact, I don't even like talking about motivation. I sometimes get phone calls from companies that are aware I know something about motivation, and they say, "We've got all these unmotivated employees here, could you come down and give us a course about how to motivate them?" They've already decided that the problem lies with the employees, that it doesn't reside in the management or any sort of reward systems they might have.

Generally, my orientation these days tends to be more within the traditions of behavioural psychology. I feel challenged by the fact that we in adult education take on all comers, and I don't think that these internal psychological variables account for much. For example, I was in Chile and Argentina a while back, and I learned a little bit about popular education in the barrios, the slums around San Diego. There's some fantastic work going on with people who, in western terms, would be considered extremely deficiency motivated. They are so deprived it's unbelievable, and yet these people are achieving fantastic things.

The first thing that impressed me is the way in which these people function with minimal resources. They don't have fancy videos and the kind of technology that we are accustomed to here. They make very good use of what I would call appropriate technology. For instance, I brought home with me from Chile some of the cartoons and drawings that were done in the women's education program in the barrios around San Diego, and I had them posted in our office here, because they are a good example of what you can do with cardboard, felt pens, and some tape.

Secondly, I think popular education in Latin America and throughout parts of Asia has advanced because popular educators really understand and put into practice what Malcolm Knowles might call participatory learning or what the report *Limits to Learning* called innovative learning, which has a very strong participatory and anticipatory component to it. Popular educators in these countries do not sit around giving lectures to people; they actually have people working together in a collaborative and directed search for solutions. They are working with oppressed people who have taken on a kind of a learned helplessness and are not used to the idea of working together for change or for improvement. It's really fantastic to watch the popular educators. They sometimes work in grave danger, particularly in Chile, where some of our colleagues have been picked up and subsequently dropped out of helicopters flying over the Andes.

AU: Would you draw us a quick overview of what is happening in Europe? You mentioned that you have had contact there.

Boshier: In Europe, the notion of recurrent education is the master concept. Because they are mostly industrialized countries, they have the same sort of preoccupation with unemployment and the development of new technologies that we have. But there is also a much stronger relationship between adult education and the social, political, and cultural movement in Europe than there would be, say, in Canada. For example, the organization People in Culture in France was born out of the French resistance movement of the second World War. It is a very large organization that more or less delivers culture to the people of France. In its organizing principle, it very much exemplifies the kind of assumptions that are embodied in the notion of andragogy.

I might also mention that I did quite a lot of work in China. In fact, we have a big project coming up there. China is extremely interesting because in its quest for modernization, the government has realized that adult education is essential. There is a lost generation there that normally would have gone to school or university. But during the Cultural Revolution, the schools and universities were closed, and as a result, hundreds of millions of people have no formal education. That's a situation where it's absolutely impossible to meet all the needs for education within the framework of formal institutions, so the Chinese have passed a law that says every farm, mining enterprise, and factory in the country will have some sort of educational unit. Thus far, only half of them have one, but this is a significantly far-reaching development and teaches us in Canada how one goes about implementing principles of life-long education. These educational units are a good example of nonformal education.

However, there is no tradition in China of differentiating adult from pre-adult education, so much of what goes on in these units is very didactic and, to my mind, resembles pre-adult schooling more than adult education. So what we are doing there is the first attempt to train educators. We are going to try to train 200 people, who will in turn train another 200 and so on. It's a rather ambitious project, and I'm not sure that it will work, but it's going to be very interesting to try.

AU: In your work, whether you were referring to pre-adult or adult education, you've always made a distinction between 'education' and 'learning'. Could you clarify what you mean by that?

Boshier: I think the distinction between learning and education is a very crucial one, and we can't go around using life-long learning and life-long education as if they were synonyms. Learning is an internal psychological process; it's more or less a permanent change in behaviour that's not attributable to a temporary state. Life-long learning, in some ways, doesn't really tell us anything,

because it's inevitable. Even a prison inmate in solitary confinement for his entire life is undergoing life-long learning. What is much more interesting and really needs development is the whole notion of life-long education—to accept that education is an external process.

There are so many people around the world including some of the most ardent advocates of life-long education, such as the authors of the *No Limits to Learning* report, who must completely avoid this issue by using 'learning' to cover everything. They feel that 'education' is too identified with the more sinister term 'schooling' and to avoid being tarred with that brush, they simply do not use the word education.

Jossey-Bass Publishers even have their computers programmed so they don't have to use the word. Alan Knox, who wrote a 600-page book called *Adult Development and Learning* and who is one of the real friends of adult education, mentions nowhere the word education, because he wants to avoid being tarred with the 'schooling' brush.

As far as I'm concerned, I have no problem with the fact that we are in adult education. Educators such as Albert Mansbridge, who founded a Worth of Education Association, were quite prepared to stand up and say what they thought of education. I think that we can use 'education' and be precise, as well as make distinctions between it and schooling when it is necessary to do so.

AU: When you look at the university level of adult education, some people try to make a distinction between learner-based and curriculum-based education. Do you agree with this?

Boshier: This is a really good question. In fact, this is what I ought to concentrate on because it's of great interest to me. I taught a course down here a while ago with the title *Are Adults Simply Kids in Long Pants?* which was supposed to be for professors at the University of British Columbia who more and more were confronting lecture theatres filled with these grey-haired people. Unfortunately, not many professors came because they all claimed they were too busy.

I think what you are asking about is the whole problem of implementing adult education principles in what I would call curriculum-oriented settings, such as the universities, health care environments, police, military, and industrial settings. And I believe that there's a certain sort of naïvety about this. Malcolm Knowles may have told you about the program at McMaster's University, where the health people are using a sort of self-directed mode to learn about nursing. Malcolm goes around promoting the idea that the principles of andragogy, and the assumptions that buttress them, can somehow be universal and stretched to encompass all settings where education occurs. I don't buy that. First of all, the function of the university is to socialize people in order to perpetuate a culture. From one point of view, you can claim that it's an agency of pre-adult rather than of adult education. It's concerned with 'maintenance learning'.

The traditional function of adult education is concerned with change in individual organizations and societies. Although I'd like to see the universities move to a more innovative approach, I have no problem with the fact that societies set up institutions, schools, and universities that are primarily in existence to perpetuate the culture. But I think you have to distinguish between program planning and the design and management of instruction.

There is every reason why the university will not become what you are calling learner-based or learner-centered at the level of program planning. I think a university is perfectly entitled to establish a curriculum and say, when you sign up for this course, this is what you get. But at the level of designing and managing the instruction, at the level of what some people call teaching, there's no reason that universities cannot use good principles of adult education. Universities are involved in higher education, not adult education. It is true that there are many more adults returning to university, but just because you have adults in education doesn't mean to say that you have the phenomenon called adult education. Now, right there is another subject for a three-hour conversation, because there's a lot in there.

AU: You mention the underlying principles of adult education. How would you translate them in a curriculum-oriented setting?

Boshier: First of all, there's got to be much more emphasis on what the learner is doing. The minute you give somebody information, they have to use it in some way, and I find that some of the distance education materials coming out of distance learning institutions are just unimaginative. They've been written by content experts who don't have the flair to be able to dream up crazy and creative and innovative and imaginative things for learners to do with the new information they're receiving.

So in some respects, here is a kind of confluence between the principles of early childhood and adult education, because there is a lot that we have in common. If you go into an early childhood classroom, into a kindergarten somewhere, you don't see the teacher up at the front, giving lectures or reading things out to the little children. Those kids will be running around doing projects and discovering through a process of inquiry. The trouble in distance education is that there's a certain compulsion to use technology—television, audio tapes, and so on. But those are just a fancy way of doing traditional teaching in accord with a didactic model. There's still an assumption that learners' minds are empty, and our task as the experts is to somehow fill them up and when they are full, put caps on their heads and send them off to a graduation ceremony.

AU: Let's consider the idea of giving credit for life experience. The empty vessel gets filled up just by working at its daily chores, doing whatever it does. Is it OK for a university or college to grant credit for that experience?

Boshier: I'm a bit of a conservative on this one. I don't think it's viable just to give credit for experience. I think that some of our colleagues in the United States are doing that to their peril. It's quite viable and desirable to give learners the opportunity to challenge not exams *per se*, but to demonstrate that they can manifest the competencies needed from a course.

There's probably nothing in the world more important than fostering adult learning. It's an essential prerequisite to our survival.

Interestingly enough, in China, it's possible to get a registration form from a university at the beginning of the year and register as a student in, say, Chinese history then at the end of the year, show up and write the exam. It's possible now to get a degree in China without ever going near the campus, and, what's more, the campuses don't have the facilities to send out the kind of resources that you at Athabasca University have. These people are operating on their own farms strictly as autonomous learners getting material from wherever they can. But, to give credit solely for experience, I don't think so.

Experience *per se* may not give a person the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that they are supposed to have. I have been to China, and it can change your life. It changed mine. But I know others who have been to China, and it made no impact on them whatsoever. So the way in which we process an experience or what we learn from it is completely different for different people. So I think that I would be cautious about giving credit just for the experience. I would be quite clear about what I'm trying to achieve in the program, and I would give people an opportunity to demonstrate that by using their own resources, they have mastered the program's content. On the other hand, you could easily nail me to the wall over this because I'm not all that enamored with competency-based approaches. I think that in this example, it's reasonable, liberal, and fair. It's a democratic way of dealing with the fact that adults cannot always and do not always want to attend classes. On the other hand, I don't like this tradition south of the border of hiring a cruise ship, going for a cruise to California and back, wining and dining every night, then claiming it's education and giving people three units toward their degree.

AU: I wonder whether a student should be required to work through interim assignments and pass them prior to the final exam, and whether they are essential to the course or not. I suppose one of the problems in dealing with this issue is the final exam.

Boshier: Yes, it's a rather big burden to make all that final exam content valid.

AU: What do we do with the students who participate all through the school year and do all the written assignments—should they get the same weighting for the final exam as the students who do nothing but the final exam?

Boshier: Well, it depends on what you are trying to do. It's the whole problem of measurement. The situation such as the one in which you work puts you under a tremendous obligation to be absolutely sure that you are measuring the outcomes you intended to measure and not something else. It's hard to know why somebody could succeed throughout the year but then flunk the final. It doesn't give you the kind of leeway that people who teach in face-to-face settings can sometimes have, but that's one of the good things about distance education, too. It does cause people to bring a level of precision to the work that's not usually found in more traditional settings. Some of the materials that have come out of places like the Open University with their keen approach has really resulted in some brilliant work, and much of that work is helping those who are using their material in face-to-face settings.

AU: Dr. Boshier, as a concluding comment, would you single out what you would see as being perhaps the biggest fallacy in education generally?

Boshier: The biggest fallacy is that all adults are somehow native born self-directed learners and that the notion of andragogy can somehow be stretched to cover all learners in all settings.

In research, the thing that just irritates me no end is that demarcation between qualitative and quantitative research. That's a huge fallacy that has been dispatched or dealt with in other areas, where it's no longer an issue. But as is so often the case, adult educators are still spinning the wheels when it's long since become a dead issue in other areas. Just the same, there are many out-of-date and worn-out notions from developmental psychology that don't command much interest anywhere else, but they show up in adult education years later.

I should end on a much more positive note by saying that I think that adult education has finally come into its own. For decades, adult educators have been used to hovering in the wings somewhere off stage, but finally we've received the call, because many governments around the world have come to see that adult education is an absolutely essential instrument for social, cultural, and economic development. I think the kind of demands that are being made on the field are causing people like me and other researchers, too, who have had to work much harder at it, to address some of the more tricky theoretical issues in the field. I find, in my life, which consists of being an academic part of the time but also travelling around the world helping people implement some of the theories, that there's a very satisfying coming-together of theory and practice, and it all feels very good to me. I'm struck by how the psychological foundations are on the wane as the new, more sociological foundations assert themselves. I believe that adults facilitating adults' ability to learn is probably the single most important variable in the entire world. It's right up there on the same level as peace and disarmament negotiation. There's probably nothing in the world more important than fostering adult learning. Right now, I think it's an essential prerequisite to our survival.

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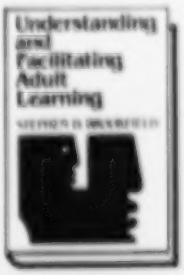

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